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ABSTRACT

The history of the United States is one of the contradictory traditions of human rights and intolerance. Although human rights, diversity, and dissidence are inherent concepts in our constitution and in the Supreme Court system, this tendency has been invariably accompanied by intolerant uses of power. The Salem witchcraft trials, the Alien and Sedition Acts, 19th century immigration laws, and the 20th century McCarthy era are the more obvious expressions of intellectual and cultural intolerance. Present manifestations of this tradition in the realm of education are more subtle. Current attitudes in areas of educational accountability, research, policy making, and instruction give priority to empirical research, knowledge objectification, and deterministic theories of human behavior. In one school district which has contracted with a highly structured and sequenced educational program, teachers are required to sign a three-year contract pledging loyalty to the program; if they do not, they are subject to transfer. These intolerant trends prompt the author to conclude that educational philosophers must exemplify the courage of intellectual inquiry, develop a sense of ethical responsibility within students, and draw attention to the ideological ramifications behind policy decisions. (KC)

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# A SENSE OF COURAGE

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at Denver

Keynote Address

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This past June I spent several weeks touring throughout the New England states. For a land-locked Coloradoan, the coastal beauty of New England is always a breath-taking experience. Also, I have long been intrigued with exploring our colonial past, attracted by the notion that what we once were can tell us much of what we are now.

One day, while staying in the pleasant town of Danvers, Massachusetts, I searched out a spot mentioned by Alistair Cooke in America, his televised series of a few seasons ago. With some difficulty I found what I was looking for--a rather inconspicuous historical marker off Pine Street. In the 17th century Danvers was known as Salem Village, notorious as the site for much of the witchcraft hysteria which afflicted New England in 1691-1692. The small sign directed me to the home of Rebecca Nurse, who had once been a highly respected member of that Puritan community. Walking across the field toward the Nurse homestead, I easily imagined myself an onlooker to events that transpired there almost three hundred years ago. The ancient saltbox style farmhouse is situated on a small knoll near the midpoint of the property. As I climbed the stone steps to the front yard of the old house, I envisioned that group of earnest citizens from yesteryear who had descended upon Mrs. Nurse in the middle of the night with a warrant for her arrest. And I found myself vicariously experiencing some of the terror which surely had been felt by that 71-year-old mother of eight as she was forced from her sickbed and made to begin her dreadful ordeal.

The charges against Rebecca Nurse had been brought by several girls living in Salem Village. They claimed that Rebecca's specter

had tortured them because they would not sign the devil's book. These charges were to remain totally unsubstantiated except for the hysterical fits which beset the girls. Such behavior was interpreted by the Puritan community as devil-inspired, and thus the spectral evidence went unchallenged. Despite her own protestations of innocence, and despite the testimony of relatives and friends to her good and pious character, Rebecca Nurse was thrown into Salem jail and chained in her cell so that her presumably evil spirit would not further torment the young girls. While she waited for the day of her execution, Rebecca's family and friends urged her to confess to the charges against her. This would have saved her life since confessed witches were not given the death penalty. However, Rebecca refused to barter her soul for some extra time on earth. Finally, on July 19, 1692, she was hanged on Gallows Hill along with four other women who had also been condemned as witches. At sunset, their bodies were cut down and buried on the rocky hill because it was against the law to bury condemned witches in hallowed ground. Late that night, Rebecca's sons disinterred her body and reburied it in an unmarked grave on the family farm. The exact site remains unknown to the present day.

In retrospect, I suppose it is possible to find some sense of relief, even apology, in the fact that of the 400 persons accused of practicing witchcraft, only nineteen were hanged. A twentieth victim was an old man who refused to enter a plea at his trial and was pressed to death, in the medieval custom, as the sheriff and his men piled weights on his chest in an effort to force a plea from his lips. Indeed, the European record of witchhunting during the 16th and 17th centuries does make the bizarre events in colonial Massachusetts pale

by comparison. Attempting to curb the influence of those whose religious ideology differed from the orthodox view, most of the European countries condemned as heretics persons who practiced any but the official state religion. Great numbers of these dissidents were charged with being under the influence of evil spirits. In 1515, for example, more than 500 condemned witches were burned to death in Geneva, Switzerland; in 1524, 975 were executed in Como, Italy. During two centuries of religious warfare, the Germans executed at least 100,000 persons accused of witchcraft. Similar executions in France and Spain took such an enormous human toll that no official tally has ever been recorded. In the period of England's Long Parliament (1640-1660), over 30,000 persons were condemned as witches. One researcher estimates that from one to nine million Europeans lost their lives in this pervasive and enduring madness.[1]

Against such mass brutality, it is understandable why the Salem witchcraft hysteria is so often interpreted as a brief aberration on the American scene. My own view, however, is that we err in contemplating Salem's witchcraft hysteria as a cultural curio, something for display in our museums or restored homesteads. The remarks which follow represent an effort to explicate this view, and to consider some possible implications for those of us engaged in philosophizing about educational purposes and practices.

* * * * *

One might tend to regard the Salem witch hunts as irrelevant today because our traditions of civil liberties and human rights are so firmly rooted. These are regular themes in the speeches of presidents and governors, and appear with great frequency in the pages of

social studies textbooks read by generations of the nation's school children. The American commitment to human rights has been given a special focus of attention by the Carter Administration. And this past summer we witnessed a national outpouring of support for human rights on behalf of the Soviet dissidents, Anatoli Shcharansky and Alexander Ginzburg.

Human rights is a concept inseparable from that of human diversity. By diversity I am referring not only to cultural diversity (denoting racial and ethnic differences) but also to intellectual diversity (denoting fundamental differences in assumptions about the world, knowledge, and values). By its very nature, diversity presupposes a social and political climate where dissidence is encouraged. The cases of Shcharansky and Ginzburg illustrate very well the interrelationships between human rights, diversity, and dissidence.

I am aware that it is fashionable in many circles today to mock American expressions of regard for human rights and this recent international crusade as blatant hypocrisy. Such an assessment, in my view, is both naive and unwarranted. There is <u>much</u> in our history as a people which does reflect a genuine respect and on-going concern for human rights to an extent found in few other societies. Whereas the popular fervor for cultural pluralism and widespread, organized demands for institutional responsiveness to racial and ethnic diversity may be relatively new--dating largely from the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's and the Counter Culture of the 1960's--the fact is that one can readily find significant champions of both cultural and intellectual diversity from the very beginning of this country's existence. Surely Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson shared a social outlook

that was decisively inclusivistic--one that afforded sanctuary to the dissidents of their times. And one can find countless champions of human rights throughout our subsequent history--from the printer, Peter Zenger, who staunchly defended the free press and the right of persons to criticize established authority; to the statesman, Charles Sumner, who cried out against the barbarism of slavery long before this became a popular issue; to the jurists, Louis Brandeis and Oliver Wendell Holmes, who interpreted the law as a means of protecting the rights of people against the encroachments of large vested interests. It is quite within the American tradition for dissident thinkers to bring violations of human rights to the attention of all of us, and to do so without official reprisal. The "Long March" of thousands of American Indians to Washington, D. C. in mid-July is a recent case in point.

The ambiguous phrasing of the United States Constitution historically has functioned to sustain diversity and dissidence. The Preamble to this document is, in itself, an elegant collection of glittering generalities which, on one hand, have been sufficient to create a sense of common national identity and purpose. On the other hand, the guidelines expounded by the Preamble have been formulated loosely enough to house a remarkable variety of human differences and interpretations. One can only speculate on the aftermath if our Founding Fathers had insisted that the Preamble and the body of the Constitution be drafted with greater precision--for example, under the ideological formula of performance objectives!

The adversary role, a necessary adjunct of diversity, is one that has been powerfully sustained within our national political

context. The organizational structure of the United States Congress has long encouraged and protected the dissident voice, despite the phenomenon of majority thinking. For example, Representative Vito Marcantonio, a member of the American Labor Party, remained an outspoken figure in Congress during much of the anti-Communist era. Senator Wayne Morse, who shifted his formal political affiliation as his personal integrity dictated, was an important adversary figure in more recent decades. Perhaps the most dramatic illustration of American freedom for dissidence is the extent to which President Nixon was publicly degraded and humiliated while he remained largely unable to silence his opponents, regardless of his intentions.

The very manner of reaching decisions within the Supreme Court has acknowledged the dissident voices from among its ranks. The long-standing tradition of the Court has been to publish the independent judgments of its nine jurists, rather than to conceal or oversimplify differences of opinion under a majority ruling. In controversial cases, the practice seldom results in the appearance of but two opinions, a "majority" and a "minority". Typically what issues from the Court are multiple opinions, including dissenting views concurring with a particular ruling. A recent illustration is the Bakke case which resulted in six separate opinions.[2] There is a deep respect within this high chamber of judicial interpretation for the possibility that minority viewpoints in one era may well serve to illuminate future thinking and inspire a reexamination of policy.

The distinguished former Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, William Douglas, with compelling force, has justified the dissident within the American context in general--even to the point of

open rebellion. "The First Amendment," Douglas wrote in 1970, was designed so as to permit a flowering of man and his idiosyncracies . . . The continuing episodes of protest and dissent in the United States have their basis in the First Amendment to the Constitution, a great safety valve that is lacking in most other nations of the world . . . We must realize that today's Establishment is the new George III. Whether it will continue to adhere to his tactics, we do not know. If it does, the redress, honored in tradition, is also revolution."[3] In this forthright statement, Douglas, of course, was merely echoing that much earlier defense of dissidence by Thomas Jefferson: "I hold it that a little rebellion now and then is a good thing," Jefferson wrote, "and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical. Unsuccessful rebellions indeed generally establish the encroachments on the rights of the people which have produced them. An observation of this truth should render honest republican governors so mild in their punishment of rebellions, as not to discourage them too much. It is a medicine necessary for the sound health of government."[4]

* * * * *

The above comments, I trust, are sufficient to underscore an impressive national tradition of human rights. There is, however, a countervailing tradition which also is deeply rooted in American culture. This is the tendency toward intolerance of cultural and intellectual diversity; this tendency invariably is accompanied by authoritarian efforts to aggrandize political power and obtain control over the decision-making machinery. It is this tradition which has kept alive the Salem witchcraft phenomenon. Historically, this

tradition frequently has taken precedence over human rights. In instances where the dissident thinker has been muted and subjected to various forms of punishment, the response by American communities often has been silence. If not silence, embarrassment and denial. The reaction to Andrew Young's remarks last July about the existence of political prisoners in the United States was revealing. Young's comments provoked widespread criticism, a presidential reprimand, and a congressional effort to remove him from public office.[5] Young's presumed sin was that of besmirching the American way of life, thereby embarrassing the United States during a period of delicate negotiations with the Soviet Union. I am not here defending Young's judgment for the timing of his remarks which were issued, ironically, in the midst of American efforts to effect Shcharansky's release. I am calling attention to the instant denials which followed Young's charges--angry statements to the effect that repression of dissidents within this country occurred (if such repression ever occurred) in the remote past.* The American way of life, it seems to me, needs to be looked at fully not selectively. Our present is <u>not</u> disconnected from the past.

By the time of the Revolutionary War, the intolerance which had once been associated with so much of the Puritan era now became associated with Republicanism. Significantly, the New England region was not alone in ferreting out and punishing new forms of heresy. For example, the tarring and feathering of persons who failed to declare unquestioned loyalty to the newly-proclaimed nation was a commonplace occurrence all along the Eastern seaboard.

Thomas Jefferson, who had spoken so convincingly about watering

the tree of liberty, and who had declared in ringing tones, "I have sworn upon the altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man,"[6] was the same person who determined the contents of the library for the University of Virginia when that institution first opened its doors in 1825. And it was Jefferson who selected the students, established the qualifications for and selected the first faculty, and personally designed the curriculum around his own educational philosophy to ensure the preservation of certain Republican sentiments.[7] Jefferson is an interesting figure in our history; he is a significant illustration that the twin traditions of human rights and intolerance sometimes can be found within a single individual.

The early national period of our young country witnessed the passage of the Alien and Sedition Acts. One of the Alien Acts authorized the President, in time of peace, to order any alien whose presence he deemed dangerous to leave the country. Disobedience meant imprisonment. Another of the Alien Acts provided for the arrest and deportation of all subjects of foreign powers at war with the United States. The Sedition Act was a Federalist attempt to stifle political opposition and to check the activities of those Americans who sympathized with the revolutionary government in France. Before it was repealed, about twenty-five people, all members of the opposition Republican Party, were arrested under its terms, and about ten were convicted.[8]

In 1835, Alexis de Tocqueville published his penetrating analysis of American life and institutions. His Democracy in America contained an early warning about intolerant uses of power in the

guise of democratic procedures.

> I know of no country in which, speaking generally, there is less independence of mind and true freedom of discussion than in America . . . When the majority has irrevocably decided about any question, it is no longer discussed. Why? Moral authority exercised by the majority over thought. Democratic republics have turned despotism into something immaterial . . . Thought is an invisible power and one almost impossible to lay hands on, which makes sport of all tyrannies. In our day the most absolute sovereigns in Europe cannot prevent certain thoughts hostile to their power from silently circulating in their states and even in their own courts. It is not like that in America; while the majority is in doubt, one talks; but when it has irrevocably pronounced, everyone is silent, and friends and enemies alike seem to make for its bandwagon. The reason is simple: no monarch is so absolute that he can hold all the forces of society in his hands and overcome all resistance, as a majority invested with the right to make the laws and to execute them can do.[9]

There is the sorry record of our immigration policies and legislation dating from the late 19th century--all reflecting nativist sentiment among the dominant White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant American whose turf began to be seriously challenged by the middle of the last century. A visit to Ellis Island today is a sobering reminder of the brutalities accorded to the aliens at our door only two to three generations ago.

There were the infamous Palmer Raids conducted in the wake of the First World War and the Bolshevik Revolution. In November 1919, Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer began a series of raids on radical groups. His agents seized several hundred persons who were alleged communists. With the full backing of President Wilson, the Department of Justice deported 249 aliens on the Buford (nicknamed the "Soviet Ark") to Russia. The climax of this Great Red Scare came in January 1920, when Palmer Raiders, acting in concert across the country, put more than 4000 individuals in prison without much more than a nod for constitutional procedure.[10]

In the late 1940's and the decade of the 1950's, America was beset with another wave of anti-Communism. Joseph McCarthy frequently is singled out as a convenient scapegoat in retrospective criticism of this whole episode. However, as David Caute has massively documented in his 1978 work, The Great Fear,[11] the anti-Communist mentality in America following the Second World War was very widespread. The fear preceded the popularity of Senator McCarthy and extended well beyond his demise. The tactics employed in responding to the perceived ideological "menace", from national to local levels of governance, systematically ignored human rights. Moreover, the evidence brought to bear in hundreds of cases which resulted in imprisonment or in loss of citizenship and deportation, had striking parallels to the unchallenged spectral evidence used in the conviction of the New England witches. As these political purges hit American colleges and schools during the Truman-Eisenhower era, at least 600 professors and teachers lost their jobs. Even Harvard's vaunted academic freedom and liberal educational leadership was severely shaken under the impact of the primary supersitition of the day.[12]

The Great Fear was expressed in school curricula. Some of you will recall the "Americanism versus Communism" materials which dominated social studies classes in the 1960's. For all practical purposes, doctrinaire programs of studies were mandated in the vast majority of states either by the passage of statutory requirements, legislative resolutions, or local school board directives.[13] An example of the political clout used to enforce conformity to a given point of view was Bulletin No. 928 (Revised) issued by the State Superintendent of Education, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 1961. This

six-week unit of study, Americanism Versus Communism, was designed for teachers of secondary American history courses--to help them implement the provisions of House Resolution No. 54 of the 1960 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature. The 29-page unit specified objectives and content in typical Cold War rhetoric--a bipolarization of knowledge and values. The full-page cartoon which followed the table of contents graphically conveyed the ideological substance. A figure representing the World stands before the crossroad of history. One road is labeled "Communism, Slavery-Oppression, Collective Misery, War-Destruction." The alternate road is labeled "Democracy, Individual Freedom, Capitalistic Economy, Peace-Prosperity". The legislative resolution which mandated this learning unit included the following statement: ". . . we believe that these courses should be part of the regular, prescribed and required high school, college and university curricula and that no student should be graduated or receive a diploma from any high school, college or university who fails to successfully complete this course or unit of instruction in Americanism versus Communism."

I have thus far cited a few of the more obvious expressions of intellectual and cultural intolerance which can be found in the American past, and of related uses of power to enforce conformist views. But there are many present manifestations of this tradition which are, perhaps, not quite so obvious. Let me be illustrative by focusing on some aspects of contemporary American life and our particular realm of concern, education.

Since Colorado was among the first states to enact an educational accountability law, I will first focus on such legislation. Under

the Educational Accountability Act of 1971, the Colorado General Assembly declared that an educational accountability program "should be designed to measure objectively the adequacy and efficiency of the educational programs offered by the public schools." The act specified that the program "should begin by developing broad goals and specific performance objectives for the educational process and by identifying the activities of schools which can advance students toward these goals and objectives." Also that the program "should then develop a means for evaluating the achievements and performance of students." The act concludes with the statement that it "is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety." Incentive for Colorado school districts to conform to the dictates of the act is powerful, namely, the withholding of state-level educational funding for non-compliance. The Colorado law is a familiar piece of legislation; it has been widely copied in other states in the years since 1971. Completely ignored by the proponents of accountability directives are the monistic qualities of their position, and the climate of heresy which is thereby created for all non-believers. Moreover, the demand of accountabilists for schooling to be placed on a "scientific" basis represents a similarly monistic framework of interpretation.[14] In their excellent little study, Accountability in American Education: A Critique, Professors Martin, Overholt, and Urban have clearly rooted the accountability movement in ideas associated with the 19th century positivism of Auguste Comte and Ernst Mach, and the 20th century logical positivism of the "Oxford" school of philosophy.

> Among these ideas are, for example, the notion that all or most educational objectives should be couched in behavioral

> terms, the requirement that pedagogy be competence- or performance-based, the insistence on a strategy of educational evaluation which limits itself to that which can be observed and measured, and a call for the use of techniques of behavioral control which depend on an assumed instrumental relationship between means (generic behaviors) and ends (behavioral objectives) . . . Despite their differences both the nineteenth and the twentieth century forms of positivism insisted on science as the only mode of knowledge. Classical problems of epistemology (theory of knowledge) were swept under the rug by appeal to an alleged scientific consensus of observation. Metaphysics was relegated to the dustbin of the meaningless and unintelligible because it could not be tested by observable experience. Experience itself was "operationalized" to such an extent that it came to be represented only by a narrow domain of sense data.[15]

An outgrowth of the original accountability legislation has been the national movement toward competency-based instruction at all levels, including teacher preparation. In a survey of state education agencies completed in 1976 by Robert Roth, fourteen states indicated increased activity in performance-based teacher certification when compared with the results of a 1974 survey.[16] The current proposals to simplify NCATE standards under a systems approach with the specification of program outcomes is further evidence of this trend.

Even more recent has been the clamor for a nationwide "minimum competency" examination for high school graduation. Already minimum competency testing has been implemented to a remarkable extent at state and local levels. The May 1978 issue of Phi Delta Kappan reports that it has taken "less than three years for the minimum competency movement to sweep the U.S. Thirty-three states have mandated specific standards for advancement in or graduation from their public schools."[17] In his sharp criticism of the Florida Functional Literacy Test, in the same issue of the Kappan, the distinguished educational researcher, Gene Glass, pointed out that "Absolute evaluation in

education--as reflected in such endeavors as school accreditation and professional licensing--has been capricious and authoritarian."[18]

Professors Karabel and Halsey have examined the significant growth since 1960 of governmental funding of educational research. Their findings indicate that the government overwhelmingly favors policy-oriented, quantitative studies--"a preeminence of methodological empiricism" with "a suspicion of theory as metaphysical."[19] Federal patronage of research is thus a decisive factor in promoting the present intellectual monism in education.

In examining the instructional, accountability, research, and overall policy-making milieu of American education in 1978, one cannot but be compelled to observe the dominance of ideologies which give priority to knowledge objectification and quantification, to measurement techniques used in conventional empirical research, and to deterministic theories of human behavior, manipulation, and control. I doubt very much whether the present situation can be attributed to the presence of millions of Americans who have explored theoretical notions and who consciously align themselves with behaviorists like B. F. Skinner, or with positivistic thinkers like Herbert Feigl or Gilbert Ryle. More likely a combination of factors, largely unexamined, have tended to promote the present monistic climate. These factors undoubtedly include the prevailing national preoccupation with economic scarcity and insecurity. The history of human behavior under such conditions suggests a tendency to reach out for authoritarian solutions. There are also the demands of the free enterprise ideology for "profit and loss" statements of the results of massive schooling expenditures. A profit-and-loss orientation has a resulting impact

on knowledge views and on assessment procedures. Specifically, profit-and-loss promotes an objectification of knowledge and unequivocal learning results. There is also the dominance of business and industrial management procedures in the policy-making structure of our social institutions. The input-output formula for industrial efficiency, codified around the turn of the century by the engineer, Frederick Winslow Taylor,[20] had definite ideological overtones: the workers, according to Taylor, were essentially stupid and could be controlled and made to produce according to specifications predetermined by the more intelligent industrial planners. Above all, today, there is the pervasiveness of expediency--of demands to get things done "quickly and efficiently". Expediency brings early closure to the most complex of human problems, thereby concealing differences of opinion. Whatever the reasons, the present reality is an intellectual climate which fosters intolerant educational practices. These practices are met with hostility, resentment, apathy, silence--or all of these things.

Let me clearly state that my purpose in drawing attention to the present dominance of certain ideologies and associated educational practices and procedures, is not to advocate an alternative movement toward relativistic knowledge, to non-quantifiable research techniques, or to subjective forms of instruction and assessment. I am advocating an educational environment in which diverse ideas and practices are encouraged. In their brilliant review of the competing approaches to contemporary educational research, Jerome Karabel and A. H. Halsey point out the peculiar convergence of different ideological outlooks:

> If the pure methodological empiricist characteristically avoids those phenomena that are difficult to quantify while the ethnomethodologist wages a relentless campaign of criticism against such efforts at measurement as have been made, there is a very real sense in which the one approach is the converse of the other. Their common coin is that of the obsessive search for rigor, and it is only an apparent paradox that they unite in their failure to observe C. Wright Mills' injunction against allowing the question of method to take precedence over the need to investigate pressing substantive problems.[21]

The convergence of such opposite points of view is completed when the competing ideology assumes dominance over the prevailing ideology and creates a new monolithic power structure. In sociological terms this phenomenon occurs when the substantive characteristics of an in-group are changed, but the fundamental operating structure of in-group versus out-group remains unaltered.

I have noted the frequency with which educational reformers succumb to in-group versus out-group relationships. I recall, for example, a telling incident during the 1960's, when experimental educational philosophy enjoyed a much greater popularity in the public schools than it does today. One of my graduate students, a principal in one of the Metro-Denver public schools, commented to me: "I make it a practice to hire only those classroom teachers who I think are going to share my experimental outlook. I find that's really the only way I can get things moving in my school!" I recall still another graduate student of that era, an elementary teacher. She bitterly described how fellow teachers treated her as a virtual outcast because of her continuing commitment to a phonics approach to reading at a time when many educational reformers were condemning phonics as obsolete. More recently, I have observed the ease with which entire schools within Metro-Denver school districts have been contracted under the Individually Guided Education program. This is a highly

structured and sequenced learning approach subtly rooted in scientific-realism-positivistic assumptions. IGE contracts stipulate that all faculty members in a school who cannot subscribe to the IGE program will be transferred to other schools. One local school system has adopted prepackaged reading programs for use in its elementary schools. Each teacher, regardless of intellectual orientation and commitment, is required to sign a three-year contract pledging loyalty to the officially designated reading program.

All the above illustrations, however different in substance and in underlying ideologies, appear to me to share the "common coin" of convergence. In each situation there is a dedicated effort to aggrandize power and obtain control over the decision-making machinery <u>at the expense of all points of view deemed alien</u>.

* * * * *

In the twelve years I have been associated with a university faculty, and in particular with the teaching of philosophy of education courses to undergraduate and graduate students in education, I have never really grasped the oft-cited concern about the supposed irrelevance of philosophy courses in the preparation of professional educators. It has been my experience that helping students appreciate the relevancy of philosophizing is a fairly easy task for the educational philosopher. Philosophizing, after all, ultimately confronts individuals with ethical kinds of problems--and ethical problems constitute the gut-level where human lives must be lived each day. Again, I have not found it particularly difficult to engage students in deeply ethical problems, and through this to engage them in probing for underlying assumptions--that is, to the level of inquiry which makes

up our formal field of investigation.

However, in the past twelve years I have witnessed a troublesome growth of efforts to curb the access of education students to foundational level studies. This is an understandable happening. In light of the legions of dedicated persons today who are insisting that schooling function like an efficient business enterprise, one can anticipate that the last thing to be encouraged would be classroom teachers, counselors, and administrators who critically philosophize in the liberal arts tradition. It is important to keep in mind that philosophers really are subversive influences within any closed organizational structure which operates under management-by-objectives principles! Hence, we ought not be surprised to find that professional degree programs frequently are drafted in a way which discourages or greatly minimizes student involvement in educational philosophy or in the other foundational areas concerned with interpretive, normative, and critical inquiry.

There is considerable evidence that many of our colleagues across the country presently enjoy less than a hospitable or reasonably secure professional climate. The reaction of one educational philosopher, I suspect, is not an uncommon one in 1978. In a recent discussion with me about the low status accorded to professors of educational foundations in his institution, he commented: "To be honest, there's no way I'm going to stick my neck on the line around here. Our little department is quite definitely isolated within the policy-making structure of the School of Education. We've learned that the best way to get along is to get off in our own corner. We don't bother anyone, and then they don't bother us!" What this fellow

described to me was essentially a political climate, not an academic or pedagogical problem. And it is a situation well within the tradition I have previously discussed, the intolerance of dissidence.

Now, what is my message in all of this? What am I proposing? First, I am recommending a heightened awareness of our legacy from Old Salem, and a professional concern for the ways in which this tradition continues to flourish within our educational institutions along with that more noble concept of human rights. Second, I am calling for a sense of personal courage--on my part, on your part, on the part of all of us who share a conviction that the operational structure for a truly open society must sustain an unfettered and on-going search for the good, the true, and the beautiful. I think we philosophers have a particularly heavy responsibility in trying to keep the doors of intellectual inquiry forever open. And if our professional mission includes the development of a sense of ethical responsibility within our students--a functional connection between their belief systems, their notions of morality, and what they actually are willing to <u>do</u> in their professional and personal lives, then surely this is a connection that needs to be visibly manifested in our <u>own</u> lives! Who but philosophers have a primary social responsibility for drawing attention to the ideological ramifications behind any and all policy decisions? Who has a greater responsibility than we for throwing sand in the gears of decision-making when expediency promotes authoritarian solutions? Who will stand as a counterbalance to the True Believer in our midst if we do not?

I do not appear before you today with any notions of self-righteousness. In truth, my own sense of courage is often woefully

lacking. I am not immune to feelings of intimidation, loneliness, insecurity, inadequacy, and terrible frustration in coping with people, events, and structures that seem quite beyond my influence. The myth of Sisyphus is something I have readily appreciated at an intellectual level for years; I have yet to absorb the prospects of such a fate at an emotional level. And yet, I do believe I know what I ought to do when confronted with intolerance. And knowing what I ought to do does provide me with a critical source of direction. I do not underestimate this critical sense either as I allow it to function in my own life, or as others may allow it to function in their lives.

Very rarely in my professional career at the University of Colorado at Denver have I received any real indication as to the possible influence of my work with students in philosophy classes. I have, in fact, over the years tried to live with the wise counsel of the social worker, Charlotte Towle. Addressing herself to the problem of determining the actual results of one's labors, Towle said "a profession makes the emotional demand of enduring denial and frustration in <u>not knowing</u>." Nonetheless, I had the happy experience of receiving a letter this past summer from one of my former students. During the spring semester last year he had been a member of an educational foundations course which is part of our Initial Certification Program at UCD. This is a course which I heavily orient toward philosophical considerations. In the process I make extensive use of very real and very disturbing ethical problems, with the hope of jarring students out of a bland, unquestioning acceptance of their own lives and circumstances. I often share with them one of the central

experiences of my own life--a visit to Dachau concentration camp outside Munich in the summer of 1968. The visual imagery of that visit has haunted me for years, and I find myself frequently asking privately, "What would I have done, as a professional educator, in the context of the Third Reich? What do I think I ought to have done?" These internalized questions serve me as painful spurs for constant self-examination and a consideration of what I am willing to go on the rack for in the present. Let me share some passages from my young student's letter with you:

> . . . it is of great personal joy for me to be exposed to those teachers who are striving to bring a respect and sensitivity of the student to the learning process. I realize this has probably occurred before in history, but so often I have been exposed to "sterile" instructors who dispensed information efficiently while I absorbed it with great proficiency. I truly love knowledge, but it has so often been meaningless because it lacked a humanistic component . . . I often slip into an emotionally dull state of intellectualism, and you have certainly reminded me of the inherent dangers of this . . . I feel much of our instruction had to do with the underlying notion of courage. Today I am a bit more courageous in terms of evaluating my own perspectives, and I find renewed courage to question my own values and beliefs as a person and as a future teacher.

I am not naive enough to think that this is a typical response to me or to philosophic studies on the part of our teacher education candidates. My reading of human history suggests to me that many persons will choose to live less-than-courageous, responsible lives much of the time, regardless of opportunities to the contrary. Thus I proceed in my own work with maximum hope and minimum expectation. At the same time, I never underestimate the occasional appearance on the world scene of such individuals as Thomas More, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Andrei Sakharov, and Daniel Ellsberg. I also entertain the possibility that numerous kindred spirits dwell among us, less than

giants in their impact, and largely unheralded. Perhaps that young man whom I encountered so briefly last spring will be among them. Even a few more such individuals, in my opinion, could make a qualitative difference on human life in general.

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There can be found, today, on the approximate site of Rebecca Nurse's final resting place in Old Salem, Massachusetts, a granite monument which was erected to her memory during the 19th century. On it are inscribed these words written by John Greenleaf Whittier. To me, they stand as a lasting tribute to the ultimate act of courage. They also strike me as germane to our times and to our own professional task:

O Christian Martyr Who for
Truth could die
When all about thee Owned
the hideous lie!
The world, redeemed from
superstition's sway,
Is breathing freer for thy
sake to-day.

NOTES

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